

# LIMERICK SOCIALIST

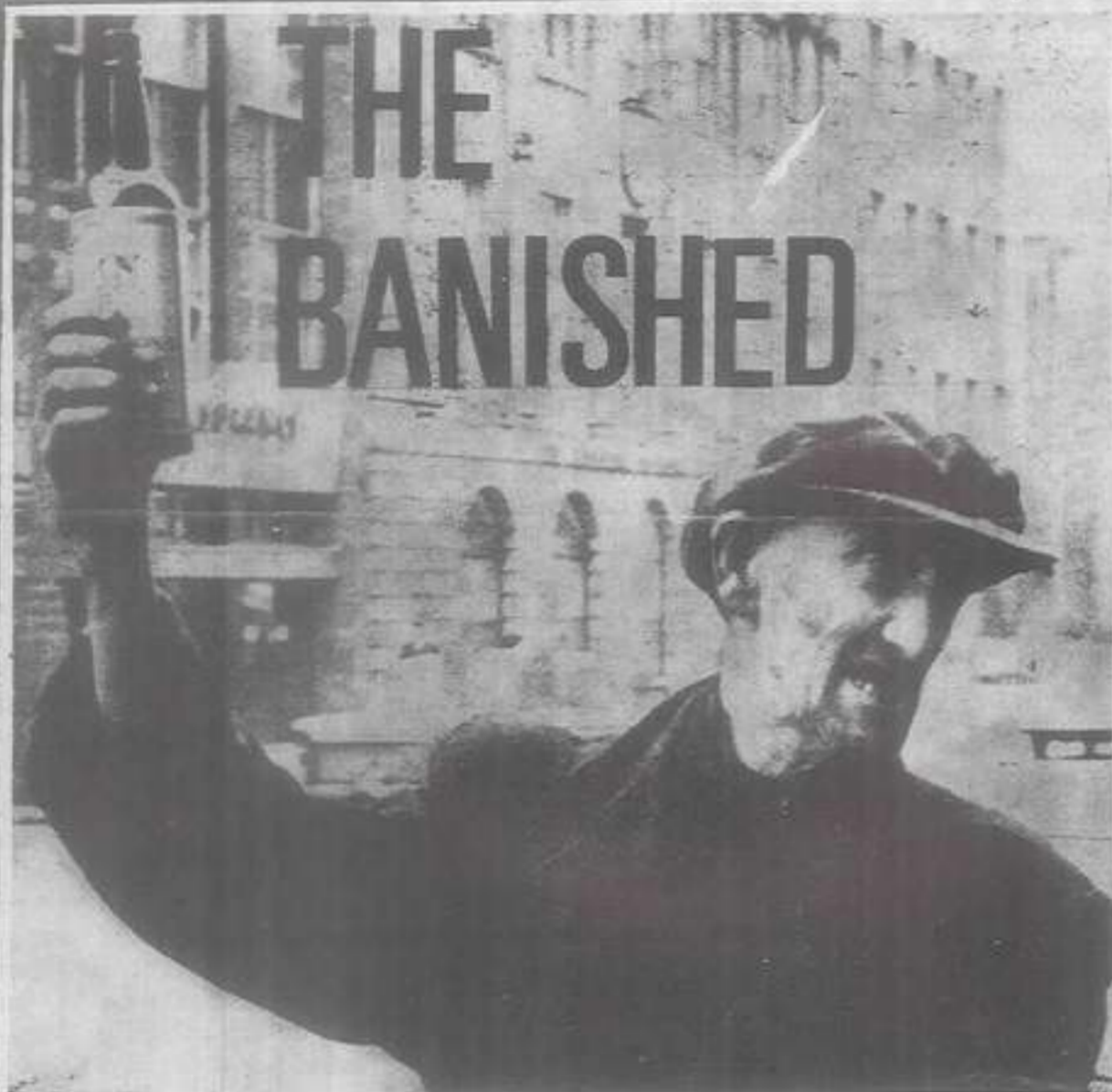
THE  
VOICE  
OF THE  
WORKER

October, 1973.

6p

VOL. 2 NO. 10.

'That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic . . . ' James Connolly



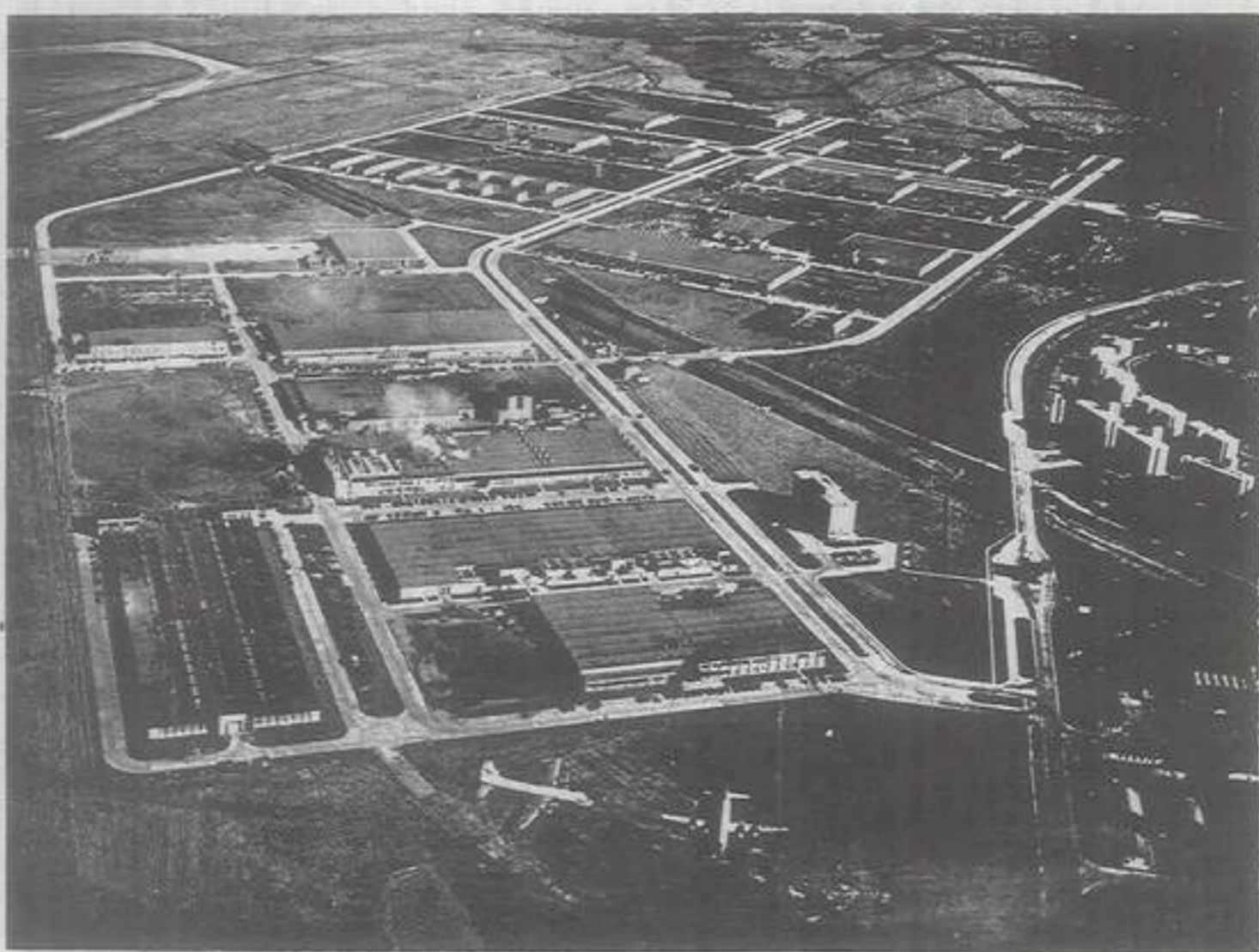
## MINES AND MONEY



The Tynagh complex.

## SALAD DAYS AT SHANNON

### R.T.E.: O'BRIEN'S DILEMMA





R.T.E.:

## O'BRIEN'S DILEMMA

A significant incident in Irish television history has passed almost unnoticed especially by the left wing press. On September 7th, Hugh Leonard retired from his post of television critic for HIBERNIA. In his last notice he gave some of his reasons for opting out:

*The alternative to a repetitive over-inflation of small scale programmes which are not worth mentioning, never mind reviewing, is "Ungawa", which, poorly translated, means "I'm getting the hell out of here."*

*Dealing with the decision to increase the television licence by £1.50 and to create a special fee of £15 "for the privilege of suffering in colour" Leonard wrote:*

*For even without it the increase of £1.20 for old people who happen also to be poor, television is a lifeline, a survival noise and fare to the hour, and the new fee is a hardship. I have already made the point, and do so again now, that the present licence fee is probably the highest in Europe, given that we have only one channel, that we are paying to be afflicted to conventional, and that more than 50% of R.T.E.'s output consists of cheaply-bought, pre-packaged programmes from abroad. The fact that the home station is conventional, unexciting, technically defective and a real horror for human disbandment is almost, but not quite, beside the point.*

*Leonard gives some comparisons between R.T.E. and the B.B.C.*

*We should be that have our grounds and then we, the extra licence we are too late to hand forward and demand that old-fashioned and how stable commodity, value for money. What is truly alarming however is that Dr. Cruise O'Brien has declared that the increase in fees is necessary to save R.T.E. from economic collapse. In short, we are being misled, not to improve standards, but to maintain the lack of them; we are being obliged to buy tickets for a sinking ship. The promotion of administrative staff employed by the B.B.C. who were actually involved in production is 15-1 in R.T.E. with its single channel the ratio is 17-1. It would be interesting to know the number of screen-hours produced per capita. Dr. Cruise O'Brien might, at any one, conceals putting his own house in order before impoverishing the houses of others.*

*R.T.E.'s children's programmes and its Irish language policy are next commented on by the departing critic:*

*Consequently, R.T.E. has been neglecting its most important and distributing eleven children, who are fed off with mindless rubbish like Gunga, Flipper or Disney films in the apparatus of Barrett dialogue is reached a crisis of "Get, Look, follow - a case" in contrast to B.B.C. programmes like Blue Peter, which attempt to win children's hearts, minds, and geographically, R.T.E.'s domestic output is confined to top-down like An Glebe Og, which runs on the tradition of linguistic apartheid: not because anyone in Munster really*

*wants programmes in Irish, any more than does the majority of viewers, but because it is easier to give it to pressure groups than to fight them. One wonders, in fact, how many Irish language shows are produced, not because we want to see them, but because some parasitical proponent of double-think believes we ought to watch them.*

*Writing earlier this year in the magazine Aquarius, Leonard, the most interesting and entertaining of Irish television critics, looked at some other R.T.E. shortcomings:*

*The function of any self-avowedly national television service is not merely to reflect, but to comment upon, the society for which it speaks and I see "comment" in the implicit sense in which it is present in any creative process. It is possible that in the area of drama and light entertainment R.T.E. has failed almost utterly to show us what is happening, or what should be happening within our society. In the field of direct comment, such as current affairs, there is not so much an attempt to mould public opinion as there is to intrude it more firmly behind Establishment precepts. A campaign of interference waged by the Government, advertisers and the hierarchy of R.T.E. itself has effectively muted programmes like 7 Days and Report to the point of silencing them only the occasional time, and then only at strangers.*

*In the same article Leonard states that "where it came to believe that a strong Pro-oriented element exists in the N.U.J." and goes on to describe one example of distortion in R.T.E.'s television news coverage:*

*In fact, the inaccuracies perpetrated by the R.T.E. News Division were not always intentional. An R.U.C. officer, interviewed while stating some of his men in a Derry hospital, said: "From what I have seen here today I have every reason to be proud of my men." When the film was transmitted, the officer's words were heard, not by the original text, but apparently in defence of police brutality in the Bogside. In short, R.T.E. had deceived its public with a cold-blooded and inflammatory lie.*

*Few people will challenge the accuracy of Hugh Leonard's criticisms. Unlike Leonard, however, most people living in the Southern and Western parts of the Republic cannot simply cry "Ungawa" to R.T.E. and its programmes. The nation's crisis has important implications for workers and their families living in these areas, and socialist must lay bare this crisis if working class opinion is to be mobilised on the question of R.T.E.'s future.*

*R.T.E. is in a perilous state for two main reasons: (A) It is not financially viable. (B) It is the tool of political and cultural (nationalist) establishments. The obvious signs of this are (i) dub, droney news and feature coverage, very little newsworthy film, etc. (ii) Little original drama or film. (iii) Vast quantities of "various", second-rate American material. (iv) Thirty-year old movies.*

*R.T.E. difficulties are concerns to small*

countries and their development. These countries can be independent in economic and cultural terms only if they wish to remain underdeveloped and poor, as Southern Ireland was during its period of economic and cultural protectionism which ended in the early sixties. If such a country seeks some degree of affluence, it must accept economic dependence, verging on neo-colonialism.

Problems become evident when such small countries with their own airlines, steamship lines and broadcasting systems strive to compete in the new free trade situation. This is a particular difficulty for the Irish Republic. Irrevocably locked, as it is, in an economic love-hate relationship with the United Kingdom. And since, for more than a decade, the country's economic and political leaders (and most of the electorate, led by the "Republican" farmers) have been hellbent on consumer-capitalism and integration with international imperialism as any price, a form of group-Schmittism has been self-inflicted on the country by those people who want both affluence and cultural parity. This basic conflict expresses itself in R.T.E.'s failure to develop a coherent philosophy.

The fact is R.T.E. cannot hope to provide a service comparable to British B.B.C. or I.T.V. It will always be a poor relation, unless the Irish home-owners are prepared to pay vastly increased fees. It costs almost as much to provide a good T.V. service for 3 million people as it does for 30 million. "Good" T.V. (e.g. a film or play, a documentary, a musical or light entertainment) costs anything between £50,000 and £40,000 an hour. This is why British networks show as much "ranted" American material as they can get away with.

The cheapest television shows are those where the costs are largely overhead and have to be paid whatever is on the screen. The long-running and successful Late Late Show is very cheap (relatively speaking). Gay Byrne gets an inclusive producer's fee for a "game" fee (usually £25) is paid to those who appear on the panel (most of these panelists usually want free publicity anyway to plug shows, books, films or just themselves). The studio set, the lights, cameras and studio all have to be paid for anyway.

Sports coverage is also cheap. Just the Outside Broadcast Unit crew (who are already on the books) and a one-off fee to the club or association. Of course, economic restrictions can be advantageous to the political censor. If the funds are restricted for filming news and current affairs programmes it is unlikely that very much investigative T.V. journalism will take place. Film is the most expensive element in a news operation, particularly if film units are being sent abroad. At the same time, film, because of the portability of cameras, etc. and the plasticity of the mixing operation, is the most effective medium for investigative documentary reporting.

R.T.E., as Hugh Leonard stated, is also saddled with providing an Irish language service. However, when so few Irish people actually speak and understand Irish, the consequence is an expensive P.R. gesture. But, of course, the biggest problem for R.T.E. is its proximity to the wealthier, better equipped British services. For advertising purposes, I.T.V. estimates that one half of the Republic's population (Dublin, the East coast and Donegal) receive British commercial T.V. transmissions.

If, as has been suggested, the Republic goes over to multi-channel (cable) T.V., R.T.E. could not remain viable in commercial terms. Cable T.V. is only economic in relatively densely populated areas. The cost of looking up rural areas, at present-day prices, would be beyond the pocket of

Continued on Page 3

**MINE & MONEY** *continued*

industries in the country". Important for whom? Like capitalism itself, mining is nothing more than a massive confidence trick to enrich a few. An

advertisement showing two begrimed miners with the caption V.I.P.s. could double for a cartoon and carries an ironic truth.

It is obvious that the mining corporations will be happy to settle for taxed royalties. Many

Labour Party members are looking to Justin Keating — a potential party leader — to do something. But Keating is not going to rock the Coalition Boat. The best that can be hoped for is a slightly better deal within the present capitalist set-up.

But instead of looking to Keating for some sort of socialist solution, Irish workers should be cutting out their own work in this field. Workers employed at the mines should agitate for a greater say in the economic policies of these undertakings. Workers at the mines must insist on the introduction of industrial democracy from the bottom of the mine shaft upwards. Only through this approach — and not through futile appeals to Justin Keating — will a start be made towards bringing about a change to a situation where the mines will be used for the benefit of the people and not for the profit of the few.

ECHOES FROM

— THE —

**BOTTOM DOG**

"We must look at life in all its aspects from the point of view of the "Bottom Dog"—the oppressed—be it nation, class, or sex."

**THE BOTTOM DOG**

NO. 23 23rd March, 1918

**THOUGHTS OF A WORKER.**

All down the ages the worker is engaged in one long struggle for existence, and the continuance of this war has increased the burden almost beyond endurance. The ruling class aims at riveting the chains of slavery more and more firmly on the limbs and minds of the working class—to keep on forever the system of master and slave, to break their spirits with never-ending drudgery and to cripple and becloud their brains with false doctrines. The workers of Ireland must realise their position; they must organise in one solid mass, demanding the right to live and a fair share of the things they produce by their labour. There must be access to the land for all the people who live on it and to all the mineral wealth and means of life it contains; these must be used by the people for the people in order to abolish serfdom and wage slavery and to end forever the so-called civilization which crushes the worker on every side to-day.

**THE BOTTOM DOG**

No. 25

6th April, 1918

Price ½d.

**LIMERICK NO. 1 RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.**

Since the bursting of the Local Government Board bombshell at the last meeting of the above the B.D. is now on the trail of further vagaries, showing that Joe O' Malley's one-man-show is run on a system of his own, which has created a sad history and prospect for some three thousand souls who live in those 800 cottages which they never now can own. Joe first finds a way to remove the independence of the Councillors and then defies Local Government Board and people. If a Contractor did not know how to 'stand in' with Joe, his work was kicked down and done by Joe at his expense. If he did 'stand in' a propped up job was passed followed by a maintenance contract and special repairs which according to the Local Government Board, swallowed up the rent. It is on the specification for the maintenance contract that Joe shows most brains and least conscience; he got the Council to fix £1 per year per cottage (at present £1.10p) and when an honest prospecting Contractor called to Joe's office and saw the specification included two tons of gravel to each

cottage yearly he went his way, but when the 'other Contractor' called 'it was alright,' the money was drawn, little work done and in 16 years no gravel. An honest Contractor once took the cottages to a certain district, and Joe persecuted him into retirement. People thought 18 months ago the swindle would end, and it was then Joe wielded the magic wand and got the Council to swear their allegiance and 'prove' no graveling should be done; but Joe had given away the show by spreading it when the fraud was challenged. The public regarded it as a plea of guilt to prevent the enquiry and following the Local Government Board Inspector's report, that body demanded that the wrong payments should be accounted for; that was the time for Mr. O. Rahilly to force the fight but he funked it. If Mr. J.P., the Spirit Retailer, had stuck to fight, it wouldn't be such a failure, and Joesey O'Malley, the shad(y)ing engineer would not now boss The Council, who all shout, 'Hear, Hear.'

**THE DROMBANNA STRIKE**

After seven weeks the men on strike are as determined as ever to continue the fight to a successful finish. Financial support continues to pour in; the public is wholeheartedly behind the men, and if the Committee, who appear to be under the control of the Manager, Paddy Lynn, do not see justice done very soon they will only have themselves to blame if the Creamery is forced to close down and they have to foot the £4,000 odd over draft due to the National Bank. Ford, the Belfast Blackleg, junior partner in Wall and Ford, has not yet given up scabbing. Wall was responsible lately for taking a crowd away from a workers' meeting in Bruff. When he goes up for County Councillorship the workers won't forget this. He advocates cheap potatoes for Bruff workers and seeks to starve Drombanna workers into submission. Ford is now up against stronger opposition than the 'man with the terrible left.' The engineers at the Creamery Supply Co. are still on strike owing to the firm supplying a handyman to do engineer's work at Drombanna Creamery Proprietors, please note: John Crowe (or Jack Daw) is shoeing the Creamery horse, work which B. Halpin used to do. Halpin is no 'daw', hence the change of blacksmith by Lynn. Shareholder Mc Cormack, like his distinguished namesake, is a man of note and boasted at a supper party that his influence would keep him from honourable mention in the 'B.D.' we are sorry to disappoint him, but the 'B.D.' cannot be bought like the Limerick Press which Tim Hennessy got to keep his name and conviction out of the report of the Limerick Petty Sessions.

**LOYALIST NEWS****"Chilly Winds in South":**

"Reading through Southern papers one finds that they are more 'open' than ours. They do not hesitate to get to the bottom of political scandals, parochial though they may be, and, taken against the smug conservatism of our local papers, they call a spade a spade. One aspect of journalism in the South is that it brings to the surface the whole unhealthy atmosphere that one gets in a State dominated by one particular religion ... Indeed reading the Southern papers and their views on morality, politics and life in general, one cannot help feeling that prostitution, violence, drugs, homosexuality etc., are symptoms of a society which is vainly trying to throw off the chains of a seventeenth century religion. It is as if, after all these years, the people have just realized there is a world outside ... The future of Eire may well be marked by a tremendous social upheaval in the near future as the "captive" people strike for the true liberty which is every people's birthright. That is the liberty of personal conscience under the law, a law which is not favourable to one particular interpretation of conscience, but which provides for all".

**BACK NUMBERS**

MANY readers have written in seeking copies of back editions of the LIMERICK SOCIALIST. A limited number of copies of each issue, excluding Vol. 1, No. 4 (April, 1912) and Vol. 2, No. 8 (August, 1913), can be obtained at the rate of 10p per copy (post free) or £1 for 12 copies. Orders for back numbers should be handed in to any newsagent in which the LIMERICK SOCIALIST is sold or sent to the:

LIMERICK SOCIALIST,  
33, Greenhill Road,  
Garryowen,  
Limerick.

No. 26

13th April, 1918

Price ½d.

**DROMBANNA CREAMERY DISPUTE.**

The 'B.D.' was honoured by being produced in Court at the hearing of Ryan's claim for compensation. Ryan got £500, so the 'B.D.' must count for something. This ought to enable Davy Ryan to live without scabbing. Conscription looms large in the Irish horizon and if it is put into force farmers' sons who can be spared from the land to blackleg in a Creamery will surely be the first to don Khaki, Davy Ryan can make a present for his new suit to some poor relation.



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DEDICATION.

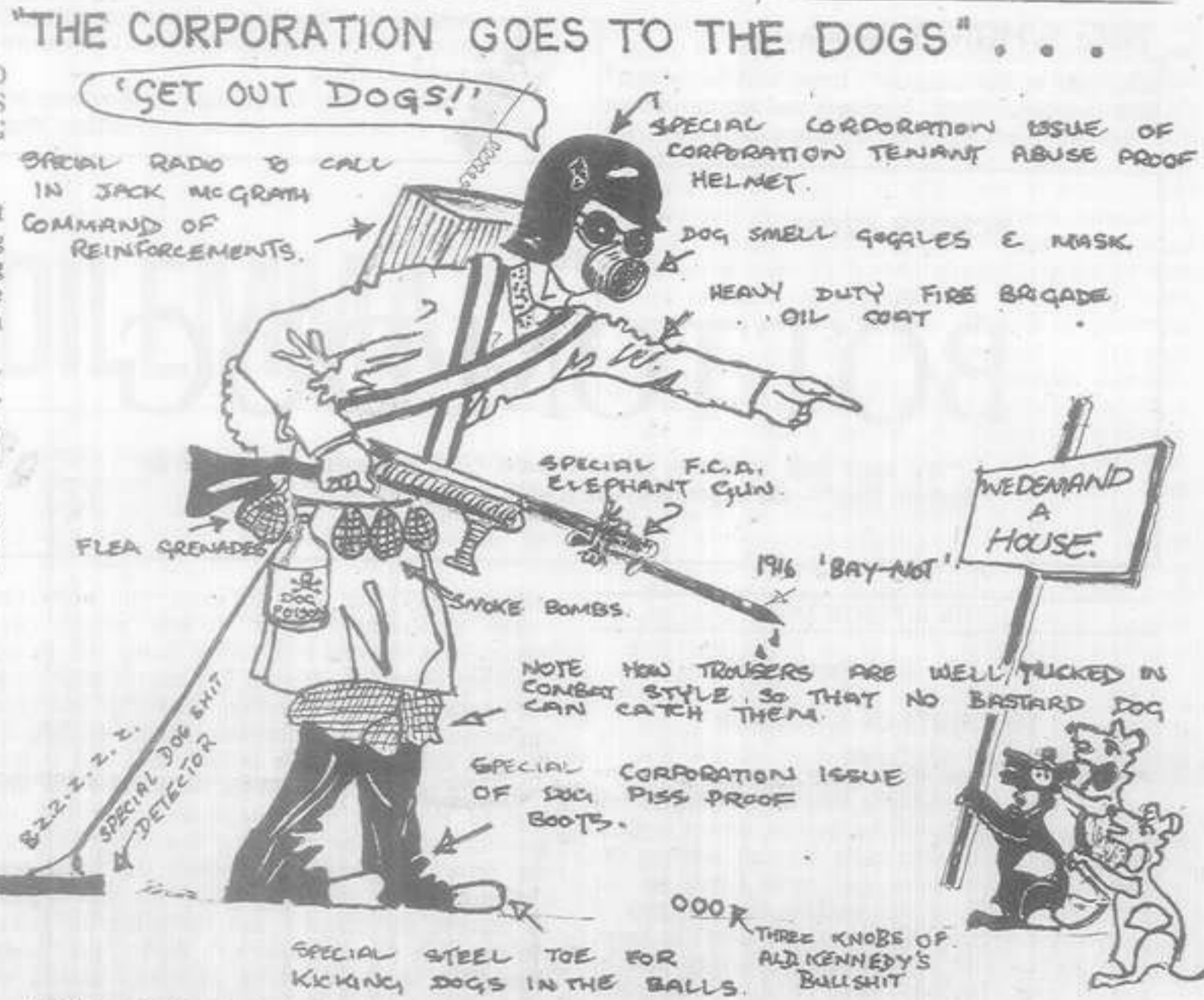
THIS CARTOON IS DEDICATED TO ALDERMAN PAT KENNEDY, LIMERICK'S ONLY HUMAN (ALMOST) BORING WOOD-LOUSE.

The egocentric Alderman had, obviously, not heard of the attack by the Corporation Housing Maintenance Department on the mad, teeming dog-house at St. Ita Street when he made the following remarks at a City Council meeting on September 25th.

This Department (Maintenance) is almost non-existent... The people are not getting a proper service. I heard of a widow of over 80 years of age who can't get a new cooker and she would have to go on a waiting list for a second hand one... Chutes and fascia boards are in a disgraceful condition. This lack of repairs and maintenance hits hardest the widow and the tenants on small incomes.

EVICITION AT THE CORPORATION DOG HOUSE AN EXCLUSIVE MAN BEATS DOGS STORY

During mid-September, two unsuccessful efforts were made by Limerick Corporation maintenance workers to gain entry to a house at 90 St. Ita Street, St. Mary's Park. The attempts were rebuffed and the workers driven off by a pack of wild, savage dogs, which had taken possession of the house. But Christy O'Dwyer, the Corporation's determined Housing Maintenance Officer decided to tackle the problem single-handed. Armed with a stout stick, long overcoat and a strong pair of Wellington boots, he strategically reconnoitred the dog-occupied



dwelling. Putting duty before danger, and taking his courage as well as his stick in his hands, he fought his way forward, beating off the attacks of the unruly hounds. A dozen dogs, including two

litters of pups, were routed and rendered temporarily homeless in the operation, but the Corporation had regained possession of the house. The incident inspired the accompanying cartoon.

THE MONTH'S MIND

THE MAYOR'S BALL.

After the publicity bonus picked up by the Mayor on the wings of the County's All-Ireland hurling victory, Limerick political circles were pleasantly surprised this week when Alderman Lipper announced his plans for an annual Mayor's Ball. The news was made public at a special press conference held in Angela Conway's newly painted bar in the 'Parish'.

The choice of venue surprised the assembled newsmen. 'We must all be ecumenical these times,' said the Mayor, flashing a thin smile. Later Alderman Lipper let it be privately known that his choice of Angela Conway's was determined by his desire to win political support from the local 'rugby crowd'. 'I'm well in with the soccer and hurling boards and I must now try to crash the rugby barrier,' said the Mayor.

Alderman Lipper said he hoped the proposed Mayor's Ball would be the gala social event of the year, as he wiped some of Angela's new paint from the sleeve of his coat.

'So it will be all balls from now on,' said Leader reporter Cormac Liddy. Another reporter, the long-haired, trendily-dressed Frank Hamilton from the Weekly Echo, muttered softly to himself, 'More balls for the Iron Man,' as he absentmindedly flicked a ten-penny piece into the air in a effort to stick it to the newly painted ceiling.

In reply to questions the Mayor said he hoped the Ball would be supported by all religions, sporting and political bodies. 'As first citizen I want to make it quite clear that no matter what code is concerned I will always keep my political

eye on the Ball,' he declared. When asked if arrangements for the event would interfere with his normal duties, the Mayor stated: 'Don't worry boys I'm on the ball and I intend to stay on it.'

'That's the greatest load of old balls I ever heard,' shouted Cormac Liddy as he admired the contemporary paintwork. Later a row broke out between two reporters about who should have the right to phone the story to the News of the World.

To-day a Corporation spokesman disclosed that 'the whole disgraceful exhibition has been just another political ball-hop.' He said: 'Lipper is making a right balls of the Mayoralty and it is about time he started kicking to touch.'

THE BAWLS OF GARRYOWEN

The City Manager has drawn up a secret plan titled, The BAWLS OF GARRYOWEN, designed to attract more tourists to Limerick. The existence of the document became known following a Town Hall investigation of people suspected of leaking information to the LIMERICK SOCIALIST.

The plan has been hailed by Shannonside Tourism and Shannon Free Airport Development Company as 'a bold and imaginative breakthrough in tourist promotion,' and its most dramatic feature involves the eviction of the Mayor and his family from their Garryowen Corporation house.

Members of the City Council have been given supporting roles in the drams. Jack Bourke, because of his considerable theatrical experience, was appointed stage and publicity manager. Ted Russell, silently hoping for another Chipperfield's Circus bonanza, had secured the contract for the

supply of bread and buns.

On the strength of his recent performance as a ghost-writer, Tom Tobin had been drafted to write the script. And to further emphasise the importance of the venture, top award-winning cameraman Eamonn O' Connor was commissioned to film the event for distribution to T.V. stations.

The first scene had been arranged to show the forlorn Mayor, surrounded by his wailing family, being served with a Notice to Quit by Housing Officer, Patrick D'Arcy. Special stands were to be erected around the Garryowen house, and visiting American tourists were to be charged £10 a head to watch the action.

A special 'Sarsfield' train had been laid on to bring the Americans from Bunnratty via Ballynecety to watch the 1973 simulated Siege of Limerick. It was hoped that a few drunks would automatically wonder on to the set and would respond by abusing the Corporation officials. This altercation would enable the Gardai to intervene to add a further touch of realism to the affair. A genuine Irish baton-charge would then be staged to a chorus of hushed tones from the suitably impressed Americans.

However the best laid plans... Following Limerick's All-Ireland hurling victory, the tourist season received an unexpected late boost, with thousands of sentimental Irish-American ex-hurlers returning to bask in the long-awaited glory. And to further confound the confusion, it later emerged that Mayor Lipper had taken advantage of the hurling hysteria to slip quietly down to the Corporation Rent Office to pay up his arrears.

Confronted with the Mayor's stiffed bawls and the hurling team's golden balls, the City Manager backed down. Shannonside officials have, however, persuaded him to keep a copy of the secret plan in his safe...just in case next year turns out to be a bad one for local tourism.